



Youth Service Provision in Blackburn with Darwen

BwD Youth Forum Scrutiny Project Report

April 2010

We are the BwD Youth Forum, who meet regularly once a week on a Monday. Our main aim is to give young people around Blackburn with Darwen a voice on issues that affect them. We felt the provision for young people in youth clubs could be improved. Consequently, we agreed with the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee that we would carry out a number of tasks to enable us to get a more researched view on the youth provision available in Blackburn with Darwen.

We originally planned to do this by:

- Visiting two youth groups from each neighbourhood to consult young people so that we could get a better understanding of what each area needs as well as get more feedback.
- Handing out questionnaires to young people from all over Blackburn with Darwen to find out why young people don't go to youth clubs as well as getting feedback from different young people from different backgrounds, genders and abilities
- We wanted to do an event so that we can get feedback from a large amount of young people who don't go to youth clubs so that we can find out why they don't go to youth clubs
- Visiting looked after children so that we can get feedback because we felt that they are not consulted enough.
- Visiting young people with disabilities so that we can understand their point of view and make the youth provision more accessible to them.
- Visit Bolton Lads and Girls club so that we could see a successful youth provision and mirror this at our own clubs and the youth zone.

When we originally planned to go to Bolton Lads and Girls group it was around the time when the weather was really snowy and icy. This meant that not only did we have to cancel the visit to Bolton Lads and Girls club but that other things we had arranged to do had to be cancelled and arranged for another time also. This impacted the amount of time we had left to carry out our project and we felt it was more important to visit local youth clubs and focused our time on them instead of Bolton Lads and Girls club.

We really wanted to do a big event in the town centre to try to attract as many young people as possible and get their views and also to showcase some of the positive work that young people have done in Blackburn with Darwen however our main obstacle was funding. Although we originally felt we could have done it cheaply when we started to plan it we realised that it would be too expensive. In addition to this, the weather was not improving and we decided that not many people would attend an outdoor event in freezing cold weather anyway so maybe it was an unrealistic aim.

The questionnaire that we put together was sent out to all the extended schools coordinators that work in High schools, but the response we got from schools was very limited. We thought the questionnaire would be a positive part of the project but on reflection it needs a lot of planning and a lot of time to organise. Much of the feedback from the questionnaires we got back from schools seemed to indicate that many young people do not really know about

youth clubs. In contrast to this however questionnaires we got back from other organisations do seem to know about youth clubs.

Results from questionnaires

22 British Asian males answered the questionnaire

42 British White Males answered the questionnaire

7 British Asian Females answered the questionnaire

40 British White Females answered the questionnaire

15 Other/Unknown answered the questionnaire

Are you aware of your local youth club?

	Yes	No
British Asian Males	19/22	3/22
British White Males	39/42	3/42
British Asian Females	5/7	2/7
British White Females	34/40	6/40
Other/Unknown	15/19	4/19

Have you used your local youth club?

	Yes	No
British Asian Males	18/22	4/22
British White Males	36/42	6/42
British Asian Females	4/7	3/7
British White Females	30/40	10/40
Other/Unknown	15/19	4/19

Do you feel youth clubs provide the right kind of activities, facilities and support for young people?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
British Asian Males	14/22	3/22	5/22
British White Males	32/42	5/42	5/42
British Asian Females	3/7	2/7	2/7
British White Females	23/40	5/40	12/40
Other / Unknown	15/19	2/19	2/19

Do you think your youth workers ask you about what should be done?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
British Asian Males	13/22	4/22	5/22
British White Males	35/42	3/42	4/42
British Asian Females	4/7	0/7	3/7
British White Females	25/40	1/40	8/40
Other/Unknown	15/19	0/19	4/19

Do you enjoy visiting your youth club?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
British Asian Males	18/22	2/22	2/22
British White Males	35/42	1/42	5/42
British Asian Females	3/7	1/7	3/7
British White Females	27/40	4/40	9/40
Other/Unknown	15/19	0/19	4/19

Are you aware of the plans for the new youth zone?

	Yes	No
British Asian Males	7/22	15/22
British White Males	16/42	26/42
British Asian Females	1/7	6/7
British White Females	13/40	27/40
Other/Unknown	9/19	10/19

Do you feel this would benefit young people from Blackburn with Darwen?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
British Asian Males	11/22	3/22	8/22
British White Males	16/42	2/42	24/22
British Asian Females	1/7	0/7	6/7
British White Females	13/40	3/40	24/40
Other/Unknown	9/19	0/19	10/19

How can we make youth clubs better?

British Asian Males said;

- Pool tables
- Better and bigger facilities
- Mixed communities
- Youth Groups open longer and more often
- Disco's on a Friday night
- A variety of activities
- Different opening times for different age groups for example under 16's over 16's.

British White Males said;

- Anger sports (i.e. boxing)
- Computers
- Working equipment
- T.V
- Snooker Tables
- Different opening times for different age groups for example under 16's over 16's

British Asian Females said;

- Better facilities
- Play board games
- Sports
- Educational activities

British White Females said;

- Trips and Residentials
- No boys
- Advice
- Music
- Better facilities

Other/Unknown said;

- More/better/working equipment
- Sports
- Music

As a young person what do you want from a youth club?

British Asian Males said;

- To chill
- More sex info
- Music
- Fun
- Residentials
- Trips
- Outdoor activities
- Talent competitions
- To Socialise

British White Males said;

- Community Cohesion
- Open more
- Trips and residentials
- Tournaments

British Asian Females said;

- Better activities
- Playing board games

British White Females said;

- To socialise
- More stuff
- Sweets

Other/Unknown said;

- Sports
- Games

- Trips and Residentials
- A place to chill
- Activities

What do you think stops young people visiting youth clubs?

British Asian Males said;

- Drugs
- Stigma
- Bad Workers
- Parents
- Transport
- Bullying
- Lack of awareness of what's available
- Lack of community cohesion
- Independence

British White Males said;

- Lack of awareness/advertising/promotion
- Fighting
- They would prefer to go places where they can drink
- Religion
- Bullying
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of transport
- Lack of community cohesion

British Asian Females said;

- Transport
- Parents
- Commitments
- Other young people

British White Females said;

- Bullying
- Embarrassment
- Its Boring
- Not Fun
- Not allowed to drink
- No confidence
- No awareness/advertisement/promotion

Other/Unknown said;

- Racism
- Bullying
- Facilities
- Rules

- Not allowed to drink

We found that there are a variety of issues with provision available to young people. We discovered many young people don't really know about youth clubs or what the role of youth clubs are. When we asked people who don't visit youth clubs why they don't they indicated it was boring and that they don't know what goes on there. We found that most community centres have a lot of facilities, but these aren't always available to or accessible for young people who go to these youth groups. We also found that some youth groups had a lot of equipment but it was not usable because it had been broken and not fixed or replaced e.g. Pool balls missing, broken table top footballs, snapped pool cues/ no tips, broken table tennis tables etc. We noticed that many community centres don't have much lockable storage spaces for youth groups to lock equipment away and to keep things safe.

We recommend youth groups should be promoted and advertised much more as many young people are not aware of what goes on. We feel it would be a good idea to promote what is going on at schools, other youth groups and to parents also. Furthermore we could take advantage of social networking groups for example sending out messages to young people telling them what is going on in their areas.

We also feel that there should be a larger variety of activities, residential and things to do in youth clubs. We felt that young people seemed to do the same things every week and even though some young people like this, others felt it could be a bit repetitive and something new would be fun. This does not mean simply to change the activities but also to enable other young people to try things they have never tried before, for example go karting. In addition to this we thought it would be a good idea if young people could get accredited for the different activities they engage in, for example certificates and qualifications so that they are gaining something from their participation too.

A major concern was the facilities available to young people. Many young people indicated that they do not have enough access to what is available in community centres. For example in some community centres young people are not allowed to use the kitchen. Further to this it was often the case that other groups can hire out parts of the building at the time young people use it. For example when young people are allowed to have a youth group someone else may have booked out the sports hall and so young people are restricted to use the youth room only.

We think that there are issues and barriers for young people who are in the care of local authority and young people who have disabilities. We noticed that many young people in care do not visit youth groups and that young people with disabilities visited youth groups that are specifically for young people with disabilities. We feel this issue needs to be looked at and addressed by professionals who can explore why this is the case however we do feel it would be good for these professionals to work in partnership with young people when the young people concerned are further consulted and young people should be fully involved in the whole of this process. We feel

that there are underlying issues that we perhaps don't understand or have any knowledge on. For example when we asked young people in care why they don't go to youth groups they indicated because they are boring. This may be the case however they indicated that they had never been to youth groups before to find out that they are boring which seemed confusing to us.

Recommendations.

From the findings set out above we put forward the following recommendations for consideration.

- That ways of ensuring that all Young people who live in different circumstances such as children in care feel comfortable in a youth clubs be reported back to the Committee.
- That publicity be given to youth clubs to make sure that young people knew where they were and what they are. Neighbourhood forums and the youth zone should also be promoted where young people have the opportunity to join.
- That facilities at community centres be made available to these youth groups where they are not currently available.
- That facilities at clubs be reviewed and repaired or replaced where necessary.
- That more variety of activities, residentials and things to do in youth clubs be considered.
- That more accredited projects be introduced – projects that young people can do and work on that's fun and also has something at the end to pay off. i.e. certificates or qualifications. First Aid, Food, canoeing, kayaking, dance etc.
- That better facilities that are young people friendly and that young people can use. i.e. kitchen and sport equipment be made available.
- That barriers and issues for young people in care and young people with disabilities be looked at. The forum don't know what the solutions are to make services more accessible for them are but we think that this needs to be looked at in more detail
- That funding be available to help the forum carry out work like this in the future.